

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A molded plastic article having a plastic substrate component with an adhered sheet material surface piece where at least part of the sheet material edges and sheet material surface area adjacent the edges are overlapped by a molded-on, plastic edge-covering component and the sheet material is a thin, semi-rigid sheet material selected from the group of: metal, wood or wood-based paper products.
2. A molded plastic article according to Claim 1 wherein the adhered sheet material surface piece is a thin metal sheet or foil.
3. A molded plastic article according to Claim 1 wherein the adhered sheet material surface piece is a thin wood sheet or veneer.
4. A molded plastic article according to Claim 1 wherein the sheet material is a laminate structure comprising the sheet material, an interior adhesive layer and, on the surface opposite the sheet material layer, a protective backing layer which bonds or otherwise adheres to the substrate plastic and protects the adhesive layer during the molding step.
5. A molded plastic article according to Claim 4 wherein the adhesive layer is a polyamide adhesive.
6. A molded plastic article according to Claim 1 wherein the sheet material has a molded-on, continuous plastic substrate component that also provides protective edge thickness covering for at least a part of the thickness of the sheet material.
7. A process for preparing a molded plastic article having a sheet material surface piece comprising the steps of: (a) providing a precut sheet material surface piece to a mold cavity (b) molding in a first molding step a substrate plastic component having the adhered sheet material piece having edges and a surface area; (c) molding on in a second molding step an edge-covering component which overlaps at least part of the sheet material edges and sheet material surface area adjacent the edges but not an area intended to be at the article surface.

8. A process according to Claim 7 where, in the first molding step, the precut sheet material surface piece is adhered in the molding step to a continuous plastic substrate and provided with an edge thickness covering that will cover at least a part of the thicknesses of the peripheral edges of the sheet material.

5 9. A process according to Claim 7 where the molded-on edge-covering component is provided directly to the substrate plastic component with adhered sheet material that results from the first molding step without intermediate trimming, cutting or tooling.

10 10. A process according to Claim 7 wherein the sheet material is a laminate structure comprising the sheet material, an interior adhesive layer and, on the surface opposite the sheet material layer, a protective backing layer which bonds or otherwise adheres to the substrate plastic and protects the adhesive layer during the molding step.

15 11. A process according to Claim 7 where the second molding step uses a flow leader effect with (a) a main flow leader cavity for the edge-covering plastic component material which main flow cavity is generally around and outside the area of the peripheral sheet material edges and (b) a sheet material edge cavity that receives a flow of the edge-covering material in a direction that is generally not parallel to the peripheral edges of the sheet material.

20 12. A process for preparing a molded plastic article having a sheet material surface piece comprising the steps of: (a) providing a precut sheet material surface piece to a mold cavity and (b) in a molding step, molding onto the sheet material a substrate plastic component; wherein the sheet material is a laminate structure comprising a front, surface-facing layer of a thin, semi-rigid sheet material selected from the group of: metal, wood or wood-based paper products, an interior adhesive layer and, on the surface opposite the sheet
25 material layer, a protective backing layer which bonds or otherwise adheres to the substrate plastic and protects the adhesive layer during the molding step.

13. A process according to Claim 12 wherein the adhesive layer is a polyamide adhesive.

14. A process according to Claim 12 wherein the outer protective backing layer material is the same as or bonds with the substrate plastic.